

THE
V A L I D I T Y
O F 3
LAY-BAPTISM
E X A M I N E D:
A N D

The Arguments FOR and AGAINST it
fairly stated.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND;

Occasioned by some Passages in a Book, lately
published, entitled, *The Rubrick in the Book
of Common-Prayer, and the Canons of the Church
of ENGLAND considered.*

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T H E

VALIDITY of LAY-BAPTISM,

&c.

S I R,

AT your Request I shall lay before you the chief Arguments for and against the Validity of Lay-Baptism, with such Strictures of my own, as shall seem necessary to confute or confirm what has been formerly advanced on either Side of the Question.

The first Argument which the Advocates for Lay-Baptism bring for its Validity, is founded upon the Acts of the Apostles, Chap. ii. ver. 41. where three thousand were baptized at once ; and Chap. iv. 4. where five

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thousand more were baptized at one Time : which, say they, cannot be supposed to be performed by *St. Peter* alone in the first Case, or by *Peter* and *John* in the second ; from whence it is inferred, that these Apostles did not baptize so many themselves, but that they only baptized some of them, and ordered some others, there present, to assist them, and do the Office for the rest. For, say they, there were then no Priests or Deacons ordained, and therefore they who assisted the Apostles and baptized, must have been only Lay-Men. Again, from *Acts* x. 42. it is concluded that *Peter* did not baptize *Cornelius* and his Company himself, and yet he was the only Person in holy Orders there present, but *he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord*, by some of the Lay-Brethren attending him. And that they were not of the Clergy they think is clear from ver. 45. where they are called *they of the Circumcision*, which means nothing more than *Jews* converted to Christianity.

If then (argue they) the Apostles could authorize the Ministration of Lay-Men, there seems no Reason to doubt, but Bishops, when
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they see Cause, may do the same. And when they do, it may very justly be said to be their Work ; for they who do a Thing by another, may properly be said to do that Thing themselves. From whence it is concluded, that all Baptisms performed by whatever Hands, whether by the inferior Clergy, or even *Cbri-
stian Lay-Men*, are good, if allowed by the Bishops.

But this Conclusion seems to be a little too hastily drawn. For, in the first Place, it does not appear from the Words of the Texts above cited, but that the Apostles themselves might baptize the Persons therein mentioned. For *John the Baptist* baptized as great, if not a greater Number without any Assistants mentioned ; as appears from *Math. iii. 5. Mark i. 5. &c.* where we read that *then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the Regions round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their Sins.* In *Acts*, chap. iv. ver. 4. there is no Mention at all made of Baptism, only it is said, that *many of them that heard the Word* (which *Peter* and *John* preached in the Temple) *believed ; and the Number of the Men was*

about five thousand. No doubt, but after their Belief they were baptized; but when, or by whom is not expressed. They could not at that Time be baptized by the Apostles, or any present by their Order, because the two Apostles while they were preaching, were taken by the Captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees, and put into Prison. Nay, I think, if we consider the particular Circumstances of *Peter*, his Words will not absolutely exclude him from baptizing *Cornelius* and his Company. This Apostle was almost eaten up with the false Notion of the *Jews*, that they alone were the elect People of God; so that he could not bear to think of the Gentiles being admitted into the Kingdom of *Christ*. A Vision was forced to be thrice repeated, and all little enough to open his Eyes, and make him understand. And at last, when, not without Reluctance, he obeyed the heavenly Vision and went to *Cornelius*; it was with Amazement that he, and those of the Circumcision that accompanied him, saw the holy Spirit fall upon the Converts; tho' this was, according to *Christ's* Promise, in Completion of the Prophecy of *Joel*, chap. ii. ver. 28. as *Peter* himself confessed when the

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Holy Ghost came down upon them on the Day of *Pentecost*. And then he cries out, as at last convinced, *Can any Man forbid Water? And he commanded them to be baptized*; thereby declaring them fit Subjects for the Ministration of Baptism, rather than ordering others to administer it. But admitting what is contended for above, that the Apostles ordered some others there present to baptize; this will not make it *a Case in Point*. For as this is supposed to be done in the Presence, and by the express Order or Command of the Apostles, it amounts to a Sort of Ordination for that Act, and for that present time. "Go ye *therefore* and disciple all Nations, baptizing them, &c." was the Commission given by *Christ* to the Apostles, after "all Power was given unto him in Heaven and Earth." *Math.* xxviii. ver. 18. And after they had received this their Commission, and "were endued with Power from on high," *Luke* xxiv. ver. 49. Go and baptize these Persons, was a Commission from them for the Act and Time present, sufficient of itself to qualify, ordain, and authorize those, to whom this Order was issued, for Ministration. For the Christians
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of those Days, immediately upon their receiving and embracing the Faith, had the *extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them ; which qualified them to be employed in many Things, for which, Christians *now*, with only the *ordinary* Assistance of the Spirit, are not qualified. And let me add, if I may do it without Offence to my Superiors, that the Apostles being endued with Power from on high in a Manner in which our Bishops do not, I presume, pretend to be now endued, so as to be enabled to work Miracles, and see into the very Hearts of Men, &c. they might, *then*, do many Things, which their Successors, for Want of such miraculous Powers, cannot, *now*, take upon them to do.

But how does the Case in Debate come up to the Case by Supposition ? A private Lay-Man, without any Commission, Permission, or even Privy of his Diocesan, takes upon him to baptize, in, what he calls, a Case of Necessity. And the Lawfulness of the Act, and Validity of the Baptism is defended, because the Apostles in their own Presence, and at their own express Command, ordered Persons,

sons, supposed to be Lay-Men, to administer Baptism.

Where is the *sameness* of the Cases, or even the least Likeness? For the Apostles did not, by their own State of the Case, authorize the Ministration of Lay-Men *ex post facto*; but did, themselves present, command them to be their Assistants in the Ministration of Baptism; which makes a material Difference, nay, quite alters the Case. A King, by his personal Command, may order any of his Attendants, or Officers to do an Act, which, without such Command, would be in itself invalid, and subject the Doer to Pains and Penalties, or even Loss of his Life.

But allowing, for the present, that Bishops can give Power to Laics to baptize in Cases of Necessity, (which is a Doctrine and Practice sufficiently Popish;) this must be done by some open Declaration of theirs, some Rubrick, Canon or Order, publicly made and delivered; as in the Church of Rome. A supposed tacit Permission, or mere Connivance can no more give a Power to Lay-Men to baptize, or make their Baptisms valid, than

than a Connivance at Crimes cognizable by their Courts, can absolve the Offenders from the Guilt, though it may from the Punishment. To instance in human Affairs, a Steward to a Lord of a Manor by a proper written Instrument can empower any indifferent Person to admit, *pro hac vice tantum*, a Copyholder into his Copyhold ; because he acts by, and under the Deputation of a Person duly qualified to grant such deputative Power. And in this Case, the Steward by doing the Act by that other Person, does it by himself. But no Person, without such Deputation, can take upon him, under any Pretence to admit ; or if he should admit, would his Admission be valid ; because in that Case, for Default of a proper Deputation, the Steward cannot say he did that Act by another, and so it is not done by himself. Neither has the Steward any Power to make such Admission of Force, or Virtue to the Tenant. And Bishops are only Stewards to *Christ*, the Lord of Lords.

Can then a Bishop be said to do an Act by another, to which Act he is not even privy ? Can he *ex pest facto*, pronounce and make an Act

Act valid, or invalid, as he shall think fit? The Act of Baptism, when done, must be either valid, or invalid in itself, with regard to the Person who is baptized; and not have its Validity remain *in esse*, until the Bishop, by his Declaration, shall put it *in posse*. And if the Baptism be in itself valid, as to the Recipient, it stands in no need of the Bishop's Ratification: If it be in itself invalid, the Bishop cannot give it any Force or Virtue.

Had there been any Instance in the Scriptures, where the Apostles had declared Baptism, performed by Lay-Men, without their Order, or Privy, valid; it would have been a parallel Case, and determined the Point. But the Texts produced above, say no such Thing. It is not from them an evident Point that mere Lay-Men did baptize, or assist them to baptize by the Apostles Order. Nor, allowing this to be the Case, does it come fully up to the Point in Debate.

The Author of *Lay-Baptism invalid*, in one of his Pieces, observes, " that all the Apostles were then at *Jerusalem*, and if each of them had taken his Share, it would

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“ not have amounted to above two hundred
 “ and fifty Persons to be baptized by an
 “ Apostle in a Day, which might easily be
 “ done, as it was then the Custom to baptize
 “ in Rivers or Brooks ; for ten, twenty,
 “ thirty, or even more Persons might be
 “ baptized at once, by one Apostle applying
 “ Water to them all at once, and only once
 “ saying, I baptize ye in the Name of the
 “ Father, &c. if there had been any Need of
 “ it, as I think there was not, because the
 “ Apostles might authorize, by their Power,
 “ a sufficient Number of Persons to do the
 “ Work ; as it seems *St. Peter* did, in the
 “ Case of the Baptism of *Cornelius* and his
 “ Company ; where the Scripture tells us he
 “ commanded them to be baptized, &c.
 “ They were not then baptized by unautho-
 “ rized Persons, but by such as acted by the
 “ Apostles Command ; as here also it is plain
 “ that the three thousand were not baptized
 “ by Persons who acted *without*, much less in
 “ Opposition to the Authority of the Apostles ;
 “ for *they continued steadfastly in the Apostles*
 “ *Doctrine and Fellowship* ; which they
 “ could not be said to have done, if they had
 “ acted

“ acted without, or in Opposition to their
 “ Authority or Commission.”

The next Proof is drawn from the Practice of the western Churches ; which Practice is said to be founded upon a Custom, or Tradition, which they declared came down to them from the Apostles, of receiving all those Hereticks, who were baptized in the Name of the Trinity, only by Imposition of Hands. And this Custom, or Tradition is supposed to be derived from the Cases abovementioned, viz. *Acts* ii. ver. 41. x. 48. but with how little Reason or Probability, I hope, I have there shewn.

This Practice of receiving Hereticks, baptized in the Name of the Trinity, by Imposition of Hands only, without re-baptizing them, was confirmed in the patriarchal Council of *Arles* 314, and in the General Council of *Nice* 325. In this Council of *Nice*, there are two Canons relating to this Affair: In the eighth Canon the Novatians are decreed to be received in their respective Orders; and so, as they suppose, without Re-Baptization. In the XIXth 'tis appointed

that the *Paulianists* returning to the Church be re-baptized. And the Reason of this is said to be, because the Novatians baptized in the Name of the Trinity ; but that the *Paulianists* did not use this Form. Give me Leave to make a Stricture or two here. I find that the Council of *Arles* which “ consisted of “ thirty-three western Bishops, in her eighth “ Canon determined the Question about the “ Re-Baptization of Hereticks,” and ordains concerning the *Africans*, who had *always* re-baptized them, “ that if any leave an “ Heresy and return to the Church, he shall “ be asked concerning the Creed, and if it be “ known that he was baptized in the Name “ of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy “ Ghost, Imposition of Hands only shall “ be given him, that he may receive the “ holy Spirit ; but if he does not acknowledge the Trinity, he shall be re-baptized.” But not a Word about Lay-Baptism. And the eighth Canon of the Council of *Nice*, referred to above, is so far from determining that the Hereticks therein ordered to be received into the Church without Re-Baptization, were baptized by mere Lay-men ; that it proves these Novatians to be Clergymen, and

and acknowledged by the *Nicene* Fathers, to have had valid Ordination. For it decrees that upon their Return to the Church, “ they “ shall *continue* in the *same Station* and *clerical Orders* they were in before, only receiving a *reconciliatory Imposition of Hands* by “ Way of Absolution.” As the late Rev. Mr. *Bingham*, who was an Advocate for Lay-Baptism, justly paraphrases the Canon in his scholastical History of Lay-Baptism Part I. Page 92. The *Greek* is χειροθετουμενος αυτος MENEIN
 εως εν τω κληρω. Which proves they must have been of the Clergy before, or they could not remain or continue among them after their Return : for they were to continue, or remain after their Return what they were before their Return, therefore they were of the Clergy before their Return. So that there must have been Bishops and Priests, &c. among the Novatians, whom the Council here acknowledges to be in real valid Orders, though Schismaticks. For if the *Nicene* Fathers had not thought so, they would not have decreed that the Novatians should (MENEIN) remain in the Clergy. So that this Canon has no Relation to Baptism by Persons who were never at all commissioned to baptize,

or by mere Lay-Men, which is the Point in Debate. And as to the *Paulianists* mentioned in the nineteenth Canon ; I find this Account of *Paulinus* (from whom they were named) viz. “ that *Meletius* Bishop of *Antioch*, made Proposals to him his Antagonist,” [who though he was of the same Faith, yet kept up a Church divided in Communion from *Meletius*] “ to join their Flocks and “ dispute no longer about *Primacy* and *Government*. If it be the *Throne* [says *Meletius*] “ that creates the Dispute, I will try to “ take away this Cause also ; we will lay the “ holy Gospel upon the Seat, and then each “ of us take his Place on either Side of it. “ And if I die first, you shall take the *Government* of the Flock alone ; but if it be “ your Fate to die before me, then I will “ feed them according to my Power : But “ *Paulinus* would not acquiesce nor hearken “ to him.” *Bingham's Antiquities*, vol. I. Page 163.

By this it appears, that *Paulinus*, though a Schismatick, was yet looked upon as a real Bishop, and owned to be, so by *Meletius* his Proposal to *Paulinus*, of his sharing with him

in his own episcopal Throne during his Life, and of wholly possessing and enjoying it after his Death, if he survived him. But if the *Paulianists* did not baptize in the Name of the Trinity, as *St. Augustine* believes they did not, then their Baptisms were absolutely null and invalid, by whomsoever administered, and therefore, upon their Return to the Church, they were to be received into it by good and *valid* Baptism. So that these Councils determine nothing in Favour of the Validity of *mere* Lay-Baptism, that is, of Baptism administered by Persons never once commissioned at all to baptize ; but relate to the Validity of Baptism administered by Clerics, though Hereticks and Schismatics : It being the Opinion of these Councils that the Heresy or Schism of the Minister did not supersede his Commission, or null and void his ministerial Acts and sacerdotal Powers. But to return,

The Sum then of the Proof is this ; about the Year 257 Pope *Stephen* and all his Colleagues of the western Churches, except those in *Afric*, and even several of these too *declare*, that the Practice of receiving Hereticks into the Church who were baptized in the Name
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of the Trinity, without Reiteration of Baptism, was an antient Custom, or *Tradition*, which came down to them from the Apostles; and the Church of *Afric* [which is supposed to have received her Christianity from the Church of *Rome*] received also this Custom along with her Christian Faith; which she followed until *Agrippinus* altered it, about the Year 190, as it is supposed. Whence it is also further supposed, that she received her Christianity and this *Tradition*, or Custom along with it about the Year 120.

That this Custom was derived from the Apostles, *Peter* and *Paul*, is not so fully proved, as the Importance of the Matter in Debate, requires it should be. But as my Design is not to endeavor to prejudice, but inform you, by fairly stating the Arguments and Proofs for both Sides of the Question; I shall leave it to your own Judgment to place all the Weight upon this oral Tradition, you shall think it able to bear. And I shall only beg Leave to observe, that to bring this Argument home to the Point in Hand, there should be fuller Proof, than, I think, there is, that the Hereticks received into the Church
without

without Re-baptization, were baptized by mere Laymen: For some of these Heretics might have been regularly baptized before they separated from the Church, or might be carried by their Parents when *they* went from the Church, but yet might have been baptized by the Church, by duly qualified Persons of the Church Catholic; and upon seeing their Error, they might return to her again, and so be received by Imposition of Hands only. And there might be some of the Clergy among them who had been regularly ordained before they became Heretics, &c. For the Proof that is brought in Support of the contrary Allegation amounts to no more than some general Assertions, that the more antient Heretics had no *Bishops* among them; and some declamatory Appeals made by some of the Fathers to the Heretics, for them to shew a regular Succession of Bishops from the Apostles, &c. telling them, at the same Time, *that none of the Bishops ever apostazed, but that the Church, dispersed throughout the World, having received the Faith from the Apostles and their Disciples, carefully preserved it, inhabiting, as it were, one House, and of the Bishops presiding in the Church,*

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neither the most eloquent of them says any Thing but what the Law, the Prophets, and our Lord preacheth, nor he that is weak in Speech diminisheth the TRADITION; for there being but one Faith, neither he, who was able to discourse fully about it, made it larger, nor he, who had little to say, lessened it. Here it is to be noticed, that the Succession of Bishops in every Church is made the Canal by which the apostolical Doctrines flowed down to them. So that the whole is put upon oral Tradition, and not upon the written Word.

I now submit to your Determination the Evidence produced to prove that the *Heretics* received into the Church by Imposition of Hands *only*, were baptized by mere Laymen; only shall beg leave to observe, that if it shou'd appear that *they* had among them Persons duly qualified to administer the Sacraments before they became subject to that Denomination; then the original of the Tradition might be that Persons, baptized by cleric, tho' heretical Hands, were not to be re-baptized, but admitted into the Church by Imposition of Hands only. Which will put the Question upon a quite different Footing.

And

And in Truth, this was the Case. The Heretics received into the Church, by Imposition of Hands *only*, were not such as had been baptized by mere Laymen, but by such as had received episcopal Ordination from the Hands of some *catholic Bishop* or other, and whose Ordination was valid in the Opinion of those Churches who allowed these Baptisms. For generally the heretical *Bishops* were consecrated, before they fell into Heresy, by *catholic Bishops*, or else afterwards, by some Trick or other, got private Consecration from them, that so their Heresies might go the better down with the People. *Novatian* was consecrated by three *Bishops*. *Paulinus* was acknowledged a *Bishop* by *Meletius* whom he rivalled in the See of *Antioch*. And the Dispute was not, as here supposed, whether Persons baptized by Laymen, who never had any Commission, were to be re-baptized or no. But whether Bishops, Priests and Deacons, after they became Heretics, or Schismatics, and while they continued in their Heresy and Schism, were to be looked upon as valid Administrators of the Sacraments; and so whether Persons, baptized by such, were to be re-baptized or no upon their Ad-

mission into the Church. *St. Cyprian* and his Collegues were for disannulling the Ministries of such Clerics; and so having Persons baptized by them, to be re-baptized upon their being received into the Church. *St. Stephen* and his Collegues, on the contrary, allowed the ministerial Acts of such Clerics, and therefore ordered such as were baptized by them to be received, upon their return, into the Church by Imposition of Hands only. So that what is urged by the Advocates for Lay-baptism from Antiquity, is not for their Purpose; for the Baptisms administered by heretical, schismatical, or such like Priests, were not Baptisms of the same Nature with our false Baptisms performed by Persons who never were at all commissioned to baptize; and consequently the Practice of those Churches is no Proof that they held *Lay-baptism* to be valid.

Let us now return, and take a View of the other Side of the Question.

It appears that Pope *Stephen* excommunicated several Bishops upon Account of their dissenting from this Opinion and Practice of receiving

receiving Heretics into the Church by Imposition of Hands *only* ; which proves that either these excommunicated Bishops knew nothing of, or held doubtful this *Tradition*: For had they been convinced that *this* was a Custom, or Tradition, handed down to them from the Apostles, it can never be supposed that they would so obstinately set themselves in Opposition to an apostolical Custom or Tradition ; especially, if we consider the Account given above by *Eusebius* of the Uniformity in Faith and Practice of the Churches of those Times, in carefully preserving the Tradition that they had received from the Apostles.

The Churches of *Phrygia*, *Cappadocia*, *Cilicia*, *Pontus* and *Gallatia*, which last was early planted by St. *Paul*, from whom they make this Custom, or Tradition, to be derived ; and several others of the neighbouring Provinces did not follow it ; St. *Cyprian* and his Colleagues, who were *Bishops* of the numerous and far extended *African* and eastern Churches, opposed Pope *Stephen* in this Practice, and were unanimously against it. The *Greek* Churches were against it : and two of its most eminent Fathers, St. *Basil* and St. *Chrysostom*

Chrysostom have clearly determined against it. The first, who was *Bishop* of *Cæsarea* says, that "those whom a laic baptizes are to be "re-baptized." And the latter, who was Arch-bishop of *Constantinople*, 398, declares, that "Baptism can be no more administred "by a Layman than the Eucharist: But all "these are Things (says he) which can be "administred by no other Man living, but "by those sacred Hands alone, the Hands, I "say of the *Priest*."

And what makes very much against the Validity of Lay-baptism is, that for about the first Two hundred Years of Christ we hear nothing of Lay-baptisms being administred, nor of any Thing in Favour of them, either directly, or indirectly. And in the Year 1166 *Lucas Cbrysoberges* held a general Council of the *Greek Church* in *Trullo*, in the imperial Palace at *Constantinople*, at which were present three Patriarchs, *Lucas* of *Constantinople*, *Atbanasius* of *Antioch*, and *Nicephorus* of *Jerusalem*, together with Fifty-seven *Metropolitans*, besides other Bishops, as *Dr. Cave* informs us. *Hist. Lit. Vol. I. p. 676.* and *Vol. II. p. 418—19.*

Now in this Synod [according to *Math. Blaſter*, Bishop *Beveridge's* Pandects, Vol. II. p. 42.] *Manuel*, Bishop of *Heraclea*, asked whether he ought to receive, as one of the faithful, a Person who had been baptized by a Layman who pretended to be in holy Orders? Because there was such a Case in his Diocese. And the Synod determined that such were to be re-baptized; because the Ministry of Baptism was committed *only* to Bishops and Priests, according to the Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh apostolical Canon. And *Math. Blaſtar* also himself, who flourished in that Church near Two hundred Years after this Council was held, viz. in the Year 1335, testifies this to have been the Sense of that Church in his Time; and says that “if a Man shall say that Baptism given “by a Layman ought to be reputed true “Baptism, he may as well say, that those “who are ordained by a Layman, who has “feigned himself to be a Bishop, ought to be “esteemed a Clergyman after the Fraud has “been detected, which is absurd.” And he intimates, that the Advocates for the Validity of Lay-baptism, had nothing to set up in Defence of this Doctrine, but a Story, which
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is now generally rejected as false and forged, of St. *Athanasius* baptizing Children whilst a Boy; and that those who were so baptized were judged to have received true Baptism. To which *Math. Blastar* replies "that what "is done contrary to the *Canons*, ought not "to be drawn into Example." Which is an Evidence that the *Canons* of the *Greek Church*, in his Time, were against the Validity of Lay-baptism. And *Simeon of Thessalonica* (as cited by Dr. *Taylor* in his *Ductor Dubitantium*, Quarto Edition, p. 638, 639.) declares "that no Man baptizes but he that "is in holy Orders." Now this *Simeon* flourished about the Year 1410, and died not till 1429, and was a *Metropolitan* of the *Greek Church*. So that we may conclude, that till within these Three-hundred Years last past, it was not the Sense of that Church that "Faith in the Trinity gives Validity to "Baptism administered by Laymen."

Thus stands the Case in Dispute with Regard to Antiquity. How far favourable to the Validity of Lay-baptism, I leave you to judge.

I come next to the Arguments for the Validity of Lay-baptism drawn from the Sense of our own Church in her Articles and Rubrics. And these may be comprehended under the two following Articles.

First, *It is said the Church of England does by no publick Act of hers make, or declare, Lay-baptism to be invalid, or order Children baptized by Lay-men to be re-baptized.* And, Secondly, *That the Priest is not an essential Administrator, and therefore if the Baptism be performed in its Essentials, that is, according to the Church, the Matter and the Words, though she condemns the Usurpation of this Office by a Lay-man, yet with Regard to the innocent Recipient, the Baptism is valid, though irregular.*

As to the first Article.

The Church does not indeed in so many Words declare the Nullity of Lay-baptism; but is this sufficient of itself to prove that she holds, or admits Lay-baptism to be valid? And yet this should be proved to be the direct Consequence of her Silence by those who

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would make that *Silence* an Argument and Proof of the Validity of Lay-baptism. Where does the Church, by any publick Act of hers make, or declare, Lay-administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be invalid? And yet, I presume, her Silence in this Point, is no Proof, that Bread and Wine seriously given by a Lay-man, or Woman, as the Lord's Sacrament, is therefore the Lord's Sacrament. And if not, then neither can her Silence in Relation to the other Sacrament of Baptism be Proof that she allows the Validity of Lay-baptism. For the very same Arguments which are brought to prove that the Church does not disallow the Validity and Efficacy of Baptisms irregularly administered by Lay-hands, will equally prove that she does not disallow the Validity and Efficacy of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper irregularly administered by Lay-hands.

Let us see how this reasoning from the Silence of the Church will hold in human Affairs.

An Act of Parliament enacts that any Person or Persons making Information upon Oath
before

before the next Justice of the Peace of such, or such Matters, shall be entitled to such, and such Rewards, Damages, or &c. but does not declare that in Case the said Information be made before any other Person than a Justice of the Peace, that then they shall not be intitled to the said Reward, or &c. Suppose now the Information be made before a neighbouring Gentleman, not in the Commission of the Peace, who happens to live some Miles nearer to the Informer than any Justice of the Peace; and suppose every Form and Punctilio be observed, and no Defect any where but in the proper Officer before whom the Information is enacted to be made: Will such Information intitle the Person to the Reward, &c? Or will the Silence of the Act of Parliament in not declaring the said Information to be null and void if made before any Person but a Justice of the Peace, be allowed to be construed into the Validity of the said Information when actually, though irregularly made before an uncommissioned, and therefore before an unqualified Person? And if such a Construction will not be suffered to be put upon an Act of the State, or to be pleaded in Court: Why must it be put

upon an Act of the Church, which enacts that “ it is *not lawful* for any Man to take
 “ upon him the Office of ministring the Sa-
 “ craments before he be *lawfully called and*
 “ *sent* to execute the same,” though she does not, in so many Words, declare the Ministry of Persons not lawfully called, or sent to be invalid. And why must it be brought as a Proof that she allows Lay-baptism? For if an Act of the State which appropriates the Execution of any Office to a particular Person or Persons doth thereby not only prohibit all others from meddling with the Office, but also makes their Acts, if they presume to do so, null and invalid to all Intents and Purposes, then, this Act of the Church, that none shall baptize but those who are *lawfully called and sent*, does not only prohibit the Laity from baptizing in any Case, or under any Pretence whatsoever, but also nulls and invalidates such Lay-baptisms. When the Church in her Twenty-third Article declares that “ it
 “ is not lawful for any Man to take upon him
 “ the Office of Ministring the Sacraments
 “ before he be *lawfully called and sent* to
 “ execute the same.” And again in her
 Twenty-sixth Article when she says, “ We
 “ give

“ give not to our Princes the *Ministring* either
 “ of God’s Word, or of the Sacraments.”

I ask when she thus speaks, does she only mean to declare that the lawfully called and sent Minister is only just requisite, for the Form-sake, to the Administration of the Sacraments, and that they may be as validly and effectually administered by Lay-men, though at the same Time she prohibits them from meddling with these Offices ?

If the Church allows of Lay-baptism to be valid, or doth not disallow it to be *invalid*, which is the same Thing ; the Articles can only mean as above. For if the Recipient partakes of all the spiritual Benefits of Baptism though administered by Persons not lawfully called or sent, contrary to the Intent, nay express Words of the Articles ; then Lay-baptism is in every Respect as good as Cleric-baptism. And it will be difficult to give any other Reason for so expressly prohibiting Lay-men to baptize, save to appropriate to the clerical Order an Office which brings them some Gain from, and gives them some Weight among the People : Though at the same Time it is acknowledged that what that
 Order

Order does, can be done, with as much Efficacy to the Recipient, by any one not of that Order. But if this Construction of the Articles be so absurd as scarcely to be admitted; then, by declaring the Ministration of Baptism by Lay-hands to be unlawful with Regard to the Administrator, as the Church does by her Twenty-third Article, she must be understood to mean to declare, that it is also null and invalid as to the Recipient.

By what Authority, and in whose Name, I ask, doth the lawfully called and sent Minister act? Is it not in the Name of Christ, and by his Authority and Commission, that he administers the Sacraments? And are not they effectual because of Christ's Institution and Promise? And if so, then we see the Reason of the Church's Declaration, that none but those who are lawfully called and sent ought to administer the Sacraments, (of which Baptism is one) namely, because the Priest acts, not in his own Name, but in Christ's Name. And he acts thus, by Virtue of the Commission and Authority given him by Ordination; which Commission and Authority is derived from Christ's Institution and

and Promise given to his Apostles, and by them transmitted down by a regular and uninterrupted Succession of Persons lawfully called and sent. As then it is the Institution and Promise of Christ which makes the Sacraments effectual; and the Person who is to administer them, acts not in his own, but in the Name of Christ, and by his Commission and Authority, it follows that the Sacraments are not effectual unless the same be ministred by Persons who act in Christ's Name, by his Commission and Authority, and under his Institution. But Lay-men act not in his Name, nor by his Authority or Commission, neither under his Institution, &c. And therefore the Sacraments [of which Baptism is one] administred by Lay-men are null, void, and invalid.

When Christ gave the Commission to his Disciples "Go ye teach all Nations baptizing them in the Name &c." Did he intend that his Commission should be of no Value, of no Efficacy in the Administration of Baptism? Were they not, by Virtue of that Commission to be looked upon as his Representatives, as his Ministers upon Earth?

Were

Were not the Offices they were to execute under that Commission to be deemed as his Acts, and as done by him? And lastly, did not the Commission given unto them confer Virtue and Validity on the Acts they did, provided they executed them in the Manner and Form prescribed to them by the Institutor? Or did Christ make the Matter and Form the sole Instrument to convey the spiritual Benefits of Baptism, exclusive of the commissioned Administrator? If so, for what serveth the Minister and the Commission? If the spiritual Benefits can be conveyed to the Recipient from the Matter and Form alone whoever be the Administrator; a Lay-man is, in this Case, as valid an Administrator as a Clergyman. And to what Purpose then is a particular Commission given to a particular Order of Men, appropriating them to an Office, which, notwithstanding this Appropriation, any one, without this Commission can execute as validly and effectually as the Persons who are particularly commissioned to execute the Office?

Did not Christ institute the Administrator as well as the Matter and Form of Baptism?

And

And did this his Institution make the one so valid and efficacious, and leave the other quite destitute of any Value or Efficacy at all, in the very Office which he was specially appointed to execute? For this must be the Case, if a Lay-man, by administering the Matter and Form, can convey all the Benefits of Baptism. And if a Lay-man cannot do this, he can do nothing; for there are no Degrees of Validity; so that what is not wholly valid, is wholly invalid. And if a Lay-hand can convey all the spiritual Benefits of Baptism, he can do every Thing without a Commission, which a lawfully called and sent Person can do by Virtue of his Commission.

But it may be asked, if the Church of *England* thought Lay-baptism to be invalid, why did she not, in Case of Lay-baptism, order Rebaptization.

This Question, I must observe, answers itself: For if she holds the Invalidity of Lay-baptism, she has no Occasion to say any Thing about the Matter; because the Child, in that Case, is to be considered as unbaptized,

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and treated as such. And if Questions are such weighty Arguments, I ask in my Turn, where doth the Church forbid Re-baptization?

An eminent Divine of our own Church, in a late Piece of his *, acknowledges if it shall appear upon "the Question *by whom* " *was this Child baptized?* that it was baptized by a Lay-hand ; but that at the same " Time it was baptized with *Water*, and " with the right *Form of Words*," (which according to him, are the *Essentials* of Baptism), that even then the Child cannot be admitted as being already lawfully baptized, because " all is not well done and according " to due Order concerning the Baptism of the " Child." But what is there wanting in this Case? Nothing but a commissioned Administrator. And he and his Commission, the Doctor says, are not mentioned in the Rubric at the End of the Office for private Baptism, " as if this were a Point not *essential*, not " absolutely

* The *Rubrick* in the Book of Common-Prayer, and the *Canons* of the Church of *England*, as far as they relate to the Parochial Clergy, considered by *Thomas Sharp* D. D. Archdeacon of *Northumberland*, 1753.

“ absolutely necessary.” Can then a Point not essential, not absolutely necessary, be yet so essential, so absolutely necessary as to prevent the Child from being received into the Church as already baptized? Baptism by Lay-hands (the Form of Administration being strictly adhered to) is either in its own Nature valid or invalid, one or the other it must be, there can be no Medium. If it is valid, then the Child ought to be received as already baptized. If the Child cannot be received as already baptized, then Lay-baptism is, in the Eye of the Church, invalid; and the Child is to be looked upon as manifestly and confessedly unbaptized; and is to be publicly baptized. For what can be plainer? The Child, in the Case above, is either validly baptized or not. If it is validly baptized, then Lay-baptism is valid. If the Child is not validly baptized, then Lay-baptism is invalid. If Lay-baptism be valid the Child ought to be received as already baptized. If Lay-baptism be invalid, the Child cannot be received as already baptized, because it is really unbaptized, and therefore ought to be publicly baptized.

And it appears, not a little surprizing, to have the Validity of Lay-baptism founded upon the Non-essentiality of a commissioned Administrator, and at the same Time to have the Deficiency of a commissioned Administrator owned as a Bar to the receiving the Child into the Church as already baptized. Since a Thing that is not necessary or essential to the Validity of an Act, cannot affect the Act as to its Validity. And if it be supposed to affect its Validity, it is tacitly owning it to be necessary and essential to the Validity of the Act.

I agree with the Doctor that the “hypothetical Form cannot be used if by the Answer made to the first Interrogatory, *by whom was this Child* baptized? It should appear that the Child was baptized by a Lay-hand ; because that Form is prescribed only in Cases where through Haste or Fear, or &c. there might happen some Omission in the Matter and Form.”

And it is observable that the Rubric does not enjoin any Questions at all to be asked concerning the Child's previous Baptism, unless

unless it was baptized by a lawful Minister. For the Rubric says “ but if the Child were
 “ baptized by any other *lawful* Minister
 “ (than the Minister of the Parish) then the
 “ Minister of the Parish, where the Child
 “ was born or christened, shall examine and
 “ try whether the Child be lawfully baptized
 “ or no.” That is, when he is satisfied
 about the Lawfulness and Validity of the Administrator ; he is *then*, and not till *then*, to satisfy himself about the Legality and Validity of the Administration, or the Matter and Form ; because through Haste or Fear, in Cases of Extremity, a lawful Administrator might be guilty of some Omissions. Again, The Rubric in the Form of private Baptism orders “ that the Minister of the Parish, or
 “ in his Absence, any other lawful Minister
 “ that can be procured,” shall administer private Baptism, in Cases of Necessity, after the Manner there prescribed, and then says,
 “ let them (viz. that are present) not doubt
 “ but that the Child so baptized is *lawfully*
 “ and *sufficiently* baptized, and ought *not to*
 “ *be baptized again.*” If then a Child *lawfully* and *sufficiently* baptized, ought not to be baptized again ; it follows that a Child
 not

not *lawfully* and *sufficiently* baptized; ought to be baptized again; but a Child baptized by a Lay-hand is not *lawfully* and *sufficiently* baptized, therefore a Child baptized by a Lay-hand ought to be baptized again.

I come next to the second Article, *Whether the lawfully called and sent Minister be essential to the valid Administration of Baptism?*

The only Argument I have ever met with for the Priest not being *essential* to the Administration of Baptism is founded upon the Rubric in private Baptism; where the *Matter* and *Form* are called *some Things essential to the Sacrament*, and also *essential Parts*, as in the Rubric at the latter End of this Office.

Now had the Church declared the *Water* and the *Words* to be the *only essentials* of Baptism, then the Argument would have been good; but calling them *some Things essential*, or *essential Parts*; doth by no Means make them *essential Wholes*, or exclude the Priest from being also an *essential Part*. Nay saying that they are *essential Parts*, supposes that there is *something else* that is *essential*.

tial. And what is that but the *lawfully called* and *sent* Administrator?

The Rubric, by the Questions ordered to be put to those who bring the Child to be received into the Church, seems so far from excluding the Priest from being an essential Administrator, that it rather supposes too much might be attributed to him, and his sacred Character, even to the making them sanctify Omissions, &c. And therefore it further demands “ with what *Matter* and “ with what Words was this Child baptized ?” That having first secured the Lawfulness of the Administrator, the Church might next be assured of the Essentiality of the Things administered ; because some of these might be omitted by an essential Administrator. And the Office or Authority of the Baptizer, though essential to the Administration of this Sacrament, is not sufficient to give Validity by itself, without the Essentials of the Things to be administered, which are *Water* and the *Form* in the Name of the Trinity ; which are the *some Things* essential to this Sacrament, which the Rubric here speaks of, and the *Commission* is the other *essential* to the Administration

Administration of it ; as appears by the Twenty-third and Twenty-sixth Articles. And these *three* are the Things required to the having *all Things done as they ought to be.*

Suppose the Administrator had been called an *essential Part*, or *something essential* to Baptism, and nothing had been said about the *Matter* and *Form*, would this have excluded the *Water* and the *Words* from being essentials? If it be said the Scripture makes them essentials. I ask where doth the Scripture do this in Exclusion of the Administrator? For *go ye baptize*, is as much an *essential*, as *in the Name of the Trinity*: And therefore no one can be a valid Administrator, but he who has received this sacred Commission lawfully derived to him by a successive Ordination from the Apostles. But a Layman has received no such Commission, and therefore his uncommissioned Acts, are invalid Acts. And I should be glad if the Advocates for the Non-essentiality of the priestly Commission to the Validity of Baptism would be pleased to produce some positive Proofs, where the Law of Christ lays a greater Stress
either

either upon the *Matter* or the *Form*, than it does upon the *Commission*.

In the Office for ordering of Priests, the Bishop delivering to the Priest, kneeling, the Bible into his Hand says, “ take thou *Authority* to preach the Word of God, and to “ *minister* the Sacraments.” Is not this making the Administration of the Sacraments to be essential to the Office of Priest ? For what availeth this Authority given him, if the Sacraments can be validly administered without this Authority ? So in the Office for publick Baptism, the Priest prays to God in Behalf of the Baptized thus, “ Grant that whosoever is “ here,” or (as in the Office for those of riper Years) “ that they being here *dedicated* to “ thee by *our Office* and *Ministry*, may also “ be endued with heavenly Virtues,” &c. Is not this *Dedication* of Persons to God made by Virtue of the *priestly Office* and *Ministry* ? And can it be validly made by Persons wholly void and destitute of such Office and Ministry ? And can the Church, after such open Declarations, be supposed to allow the Validity of Lay-baptism ? I think not.

The Scripture does no where, that I know of, in exprefs Terms null and make void a Baptism performed without Water, nor without the Form in the Name of the Trinity. But it is null and void by the Law of Christ, because *that* requires Water and the Form. If then a Baptism without the Matter and the Form be null and void, because the Matter and the Form are required; by Parity of Reason, a Baptism without a commissioned Administrator is null and void, because a commissioned Administrator is required by the Articles of the Church of *England* founded upon the Law of Christ.

The Church in her Thirtieth Article calls the *Bread and Wine* “both Parts of the “Lord’s Sacrament,” but says nothing of the Administrator.

Will it thence follow that a commissioned Administrator is not an Essential of this Sacrament; or may a Lay-hand administer this Sacrament also effectually? If a commissioned Administrator is an Essential of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; where, and by what is he made so, which does not equally make a
 commissioned

commissioned Administrator essential to the
 Sacrament of Baptism? And if the only Sa-
 craments which Christ has ordained in his
 Church as generally necessary to Salvation,
 can be validly and effectually administred by
 Lay-hands, to what End hath he ordained
 the Priesthood? And what will become of
 it? The State, indeed, whilst it sees fit may
 by its Authority vest the sole Administration
 of the Sacraments in the Clergy, but this will
 be only *Priestcraft*, supported by *State-*
craft. For if the *Matter* and *Form*, or the
 outward Parts and Symbols of the Sacraments
 be the *only Essentials*, every one will per-
 ceive that where *these* are preserved, the Sa-
 craments will be valid and effectual by what
 Hands soever they are administred. For if a
 commissioned and authorized Minister be not
 essential to the Administration of the Sacra-
 ments, or be not an essential Administrator,
 he is nothing. For to talk of the Commission
 and Authority of the Administrator though
 not *essential* as yet being *requisite*, is making a
 Distinction without any Difference, since, if
 a Lay-hand can administer Baptism (for In-
 stance) validly and effectually as to the Reci-
 pient; what is further required? To what is

the commissioned Minister requisite? If any one of the Servants of a Lord of the Manor can validly and effectually admit a Tenant into his Copy-hold, and put him in full Possession thereof; a Man of common Sense would laugh at the Steward, if, allowing this, he should tell him *that nevertheless his Commission and Authority, though not essential, was yet requisite.*

Although some of our own Communion have made so light of the priestly Commission as to look upon it as only requisite for Form-sake, and to be no Way *essential* to the Administration of the Sacraments, yet the Presbyterians set an higher Value upon their *ministerial Commission*, esteeming it of *divine Right*, and therefore disallow the Validity of Lay-baptism. For their *Directory*, published by the highest Authority they ever had in *England*, declares that “ Baptism is not to be
 “ administred *in any Case*, by any *private*
 “ Person, but by a *Minister of Christ*, called
 “ to be the Steward of the Mysteries of God.”
 And the *Confession of Faith*, published by the same Authority, says “ there be only two
 “ Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in
 “ the

“ the Gospel ; that is to say, Baptism and the
 “ Supper of the Lord : Neither of which may
 “ be dispensed by *any*, but by a Minister of
 “ the Word *lawfully* ordained.”

And some Time before this *Cartwright*
 the Puritan, as cited by *Hooker* in his ecclesi-
 astical Polity, Book V. Sect. 62. says “ Whe-
 “ ther he be a Minister or no *dependeth* not
 “ only the Dignity, but the *Being of the*
 “ *Sacrament*, so that I take the Baptism of
 “ Women to be no more the holy Sacrament
 “ of Baptism, than any other *daily*, or ordi-
 “ nary Washing of the Child.”

So that if this Concession of the Validity of
 Lay-baptism be intended for *their* Sakes ; it
 is paying them a Compliment, which in the
 same Circumstances, they would not return.

The Twenty-seventh Article of the Church
 of *England* defines Baptism to be “ not only
 “ a Sign of Profession and Mark of Difference,
 “ but also a Sign of Regeneration, or new
 “ Birth ; whereby, as by an Instrument,
 “ they that receive Baptism *rightly*, are
 “ grafted into the Church.”

Now

Now they do not receive Baptism *rightly*, in the Sense of the Church, that receive it from Lay-hands, because in her Twenty-third Article she makes commissioned Ministers the *only right* Administrators of Baptism; and therefore such an Administrator is essential to the right Administration of this Sacrament; and so Lay-baptism is invalid.

Those who plead that the Unworthiness of the Administrator in Lay-baptism may yet not affect the Efficacy of this Sacrament as to the Recipient, would do well to consider that the Church speaks of commissioned Administrators when she declares in her Twenty-sixth Article, that the Unworthiness of the Ministers hinders not the Effects of the Sacraments. And she gives this Reason for it "because they minister not in their own Name but in Christ's, and by his Commission and Authority." So that it is acting as Christ's authorized Minister, that gives the *Efficacy* to the Administration. But a Person cannot act in Christ's Name, or by his Authority, or be his Minister, unless he be lawfully called and sent; but a Lay-man is not lawfully called and sent, and therefore
cannot

cannot act as Christ's Minister, in his Name, or by his Authority, which gives Efficacy to his Ministry, therefore the Administration of a lawfully called and sent Person is necessary, and that of a Laic null and void.

I must observe that the Writers in Defence of the Validity of Lay-baptism, which I have seen, keep not *strictly* to the Point in Debate, but generally drop it at the last, and talk of what God in his Mercy may do with Regard to the Recipients of Baptism by Lay-hands; but then, they should not, at the same Time, insist upon the Validity of Lay-baptism. For if Lay-baptism be, as they say, valid, the Recipient is as safe, and as much an admitted Member of Christ and Child of God, as the Recipient of Baptism by a commissioned Minister. And if Lay-baptism does not, *ipso facto*, ingraft the Recipient into the Church, &c. it is not valid and effectual.

Indeed, this flying to the Mercies of God for the Validity of Lay-baptism, is in Fact giving up the Point; it is saying that God, if it so pleases him, may, in his Mercy to the Recipient, make valid and ratify an Act,
which

which of itself is invalid. And if this be all that is contended for, I dare say the most strenuous Opposers of the Validity of Lay-baptism will not controvert it, or presume to limit the Mercies of God. But let it still be remembered, when it is said “ that the Salvation of a Child may be as safely trusted
 “ with the Mercies of God without Baptism,
 “ as with one that is irregular, that is to say
 “ performed by Persons not authorized, or
 “ commissioned to give it,” that this is giving up the Validity of Lay-baptism. Since if Lay-baptism be in its own Nature valid and effectual, the Child who receives it, is in the same State of Salvation, as the Child who is baptized by an authorized, or commissioned Minister. And if, as above, the Child who is baptized by a Lay-hand, and a Child unbaptized be put upon the same Footing, Lay-baptism is not valid.

About the Year 1712 this Controversy run pretty high. And I have here laid before you for your Decision, the most material Arguments on both Sides of the Question, not omitting what has been lately, though incidentally, advanced by a Writer of distinguished Abilities,

Abilities, more particularly in the critical and casuistic Way ; whose Performance, and seeming Inclination to the Side of the Validity of Lay-baptism, has, as you say, been the chief Motive of giving me (as you are pleased to call it) this Trouble, which I shall never look upon as such, when I am able to give you any Satisfaction.

I shall conclude with relating a remarkable Incident that happened at the Time above-mentioned, when this Controversy took up pretty much the Attention of the publick.

A certain Doctor of Divinity was very warm in his Commendation of a Pamphlet published at that Time called *the Judgment of the Church of England in the Case of Lay-baptism, &c.* as an unanswerable Book, and which contained the true Doctrine of the Church of *England, &c.* Yet this very same Doctor, at the very same Time that he was crying up a Book in Favour of the Validity of Lay-baptism ; did publickly, in the hearing of good and credible Witnesses, say to this Effect, “ that he would rather suffer a Child
“ of his to die without Baptism, than let a

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“ Lay-

"Lay-person baptize it, if no Minister could
 "be had." Which shews that a Person, for
 Reasons best known to himself, may recom-
 mend a Doctrine to the Publick, which in
 his Heart he condemns and disbelieves.

I am,

Sir,

Yours, &c.

JAMES MOODY.

